

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT

Scott Press Release



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LEGISLATION CREATING JUNETEENTH NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY & SOJOURNER TRUTH DAY SIGNED INTO LAW

(LANSING) – Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park) is happy to announce that her bill, Senate Bill 384 (Public Act 48), designating the third Saturday in June of each year as “Juneteenth National Freedom Day” and November 26 of each year as “Sojourner Truth Day,” was signed into law today by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. Michigan joins the ranks of 17 other states across the country in recognizing Juneteenth as an official state holiday.

“This official day of recognition will encourage individuals from all walks of life to pause on this day and reflect not only upon the horrors of slavery, but also the great excitement and joy with which African-Americans first celebrated the abolition of slavery,” said Sen. Scott. “I am deeply grateful for the support of my legislative colleagues and our Governor in making this formal day of celebration a reality.”

“It is only fitting that we also recognize and celebrate the important contributions of one of this country’s most famous African American women, who lived the latter part of her life in Michigan,” added Sen. Scott. “Sojourner Truth worked tirelessly for many years to abolish slavery and to establish equal rights for women.”

The Juneteenth celebration originated in Texas during the Civil War period, when news of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Abraham Lincoln in September of 1862, to become effective on January 1, 1863, did not reach Texas slaves until June 1865. The slaves immediately left the plantations, congregated in the cities and began celebrating their freedom by praying, feasting, dancing, and singing.

Born a slave named Isabella in 1797, Sojourner Truth chose her new name soon after she left slavery.

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She traveled the country speaking passionately about the evils of slavery and advocated strongly for the equal rights of women, and several other significant social reform and human justice movements in the 19th century. She inspired many to work in support of human rights issues. Truth lived in Battle Creek from 1857 until her death on November 26, 1883.

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Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.